

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 933

WHEREAS, Debra L. Friedkin made a site along Buttermilk Creek in Bell County available to Texas A&M University's Center for the Study of the First Americans in 2006, and research at the site is adding immeasurably to our understanding of the first Americans; and

WHEREAS, Since the 1930s, archaeologists have believed that early inhabitants of the Americas, named the Clovis people for artifacts found near Clovis, New Mexico, arrived in North America from Asia, by way of the Bering Land Bridge, as the last Ice Age waned about 13,500 years ago; over the past few decades, however, credible evidence has emerged for pre-Clovis human occupation of the Americas, but until now the evidence has been incomplete; and

WHEREAS, The land in Bell County, now known as the Debra L. Friedkin site, has been under excavation for five years by Michael R. Waters, director of the Center for the Study of the First Americans, and his team of scientists and researchers from Texas A&M University, Baylor University, the University of Illinois at Chicago, the University of Minnesota, and Texas State University--San Marcos, and the group has found artifacts that support the pre-Clovis theory; and

WHEREAS, The excavation of the Debra L. Friedkin site has revealed deposits that testify to human occupation spanning the last 15,500 years; layers near the surface show evidence of late Prehistoric and Archaic occupants of the region, while deeper layers reflect Folsom and Clovis occupations dating back 12,000 to 13,000 years; below this, researchers have discovered nearly 16,000 artifacts that appear to be pre-Clovis in origin; and

WHEREAS, Multiple studies suggest that the Debra L. Friedkin site is undisturbed and intact; because the lack of organic material at the site made carbon dating impossible, researchers employed a technique known as optically stimulated luminescence, which detects the last time the sediment surrounding the artifacts received exposure to sunlight, and more than 60 such measures show that people had arrived there by 15,500 years ago; and

WHEREAS, The discoveries from the excavation at the Debra L. Friedkin site are bringing archaeologists and other members of the scientific community much closer to solving mysteries of early human habitation of the Americas, and their work would not be possible without the generosity of Ms. Friedkin; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 82nd Legislature, hereby honor Debra L. Friedkin for her support of the ongoing research at the Debra L. Friedkin site and extend to her sincere gratitude for the advances in knowledge of human history she is helping to realize; and, be it further

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RESOLVED, That an official copy of this Resolution be prepared for Ms. Friedkin as an expression of high regard from the Texas Senate.

Ellis

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on May 6, 2011.

Secretary of the Senate

Member, Texas Senate